

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /089 W

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R 100630Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4381

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

/USMISSION USUN 441

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 877

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,KS,CE

SUBJECT: KOREAN ISSUE AT COLOMBO NAC

REF: SEOUL 1729

1. EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO ADD SOME COMMENTS TO SEOUL REFTEL TO FURTHER CLARIFY SITUATION. WE FEEL COMMENT THAT NORTH KOREANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH PARITY WITH SOUTH KOREANS IN COLOMBO MAY BE MISLEADING. SRI LANKA GOVERNMENT (GSL) EXTENDED DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO DPRK IN 1970 AND NORTH KOREANS HAD EMBASSY HERE UNTIL APRIL 1971. DPRK AMBASSADOR TO NEW DELHI IS NOW CONCURRENTLY ACCREDITED TO GSL. ROK HAS NOT BEEN ACCORDED DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION BY GSL. THUS OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT SOUTH KOREANS ARE ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH PARITY FOR THEMSELVES BY OBTAINING GSL'S AGREEMENT TO EXTEND DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO SEOUL. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THIS IN SEOUL'S PRIMARY AIM AND QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN COLOMBO IS SECONDARY, AS LONG AS BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH ARE TREATED EQUALLY.

2. REALISTICALLY, PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE WILL HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY RESISTING PRESSURES FROM
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ALGERIANS AND OTHERS TO ALLOW NORTH KOREANS TO

REESTABLISH RESIDENT EMBASSY HERE PRIOR TO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT IN AUGUST, WHICH, BY ALL INDICATIONS, KIM II SUNG PLANS TO ATTEND. MUCH MAY DEPEND ON HOW INSISTENT PM IS IN REQUIRING EXPLANATION FROM NORTH KOREANS REGARDING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN ILLEGAL CURRENCY TRANSACTION IN APRIL 1971. TIMING OF TRANSACTION COINCIDED WITH LEFTIST INSURRECTION AND LED TO NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS BEING EXPELLED AT THAT TIME. ALTHOUGH LEGAL PRECEEDINGS ARE JUST BEING WOUND UP IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL VIOLATION CASE IN WHICH NORTH KOREANS ARE INVOLVED. HEARING DID NOT MAKE CLEAR WHAT NORTH KOREAN ROLE WAS NOR HAS PYONGYANG SUBMITTED SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION OF ITS INVOLVEMENT AS REQUESTED BY GSL. APPEARS TO US ONLY BASIS FOR HOPING NORTH KOREANS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REESTABLISH RESIDENT EMBASSY IS IF PM, WHO CAN BE VERY VINDICTIVE, DIGS IN HER HEELS AND INSISTS ON EXPLANATION SATISFACTORY TO HER.

3. EMBASSY HAS BEEN SUPPORTING ROK TRADE REPRESENTATIVE'S EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT SOUTH KOREA WILL ATTAIN DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION FROM GSL IF NORTH KOREA IS ALLOWED RESIDENT REPRESENTATION. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL WHETHER GSL WILL PRUBLICLY EXTEND RECOGNITION TO ROK BEFORE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT. VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LOBBYING, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, AMITY, NONALIGNED NATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COLOMB00877
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760091-0652
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760377/aaaacpox.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SEOUL 1729
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <22 SEP 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN ISSUE AT COLOMBO NAC
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, KS, CE, KN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006